



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## Minutes, Sept. 2010

### Vision 2020 Diversity Task Group (DTG)

**September 13, 2010, Minutes**

Approved at the October 18, 2010 meeting

**Present:** Kaitlyn O'Connell (co-chair), Clare Gordon, Mary Harrison, Steve Pereira, Ilana Rhodes, Miriam Stein (co-chair).

We discussed new requirements of the Open Meeting Law, as outlined in the memorandum we received from the Town's Planning Department.

Members of the Committee to Increase the Diversity Among Town Meeting Members presented and discussed their report. It is attached to these minutes. One of the significant findings was that close to  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the people who ran for Town Meeting were asked to run by a friend or acquaintance. We will add a paragraph to the beginning of the report and ask the Arlington Advocate to print it after Town Day.

We brainstormed some potential outreach strategies to increase the diversity among Town Meeting Members and other Town Committees and Boards. A sub-group will meet to propose strategies. Sub-group members to date are: Ilana Rhodes, Carolyn Parsons, with assistance from Clare Gordon. We will identify other interested people and invite them to join the sub-group. Miriam Stein will also work with the sub-group.

The Council on Aging has expressed an interest in diversifying its board. Ilana Rhodes will work on this, possibly with others.

We discussed the wisdom and need to increase the diversity among Diversity Task Group members. We will ask people we might know of diverse backgrounds etc. to join our group. We'll also place flyers in various ethnic restaurants in town.

We discussed our Town Day display and asked people to volunteer to staff the table. We will also make personal requests to active DTG members who were not present at the meeting.

We decided to postpone whether or not we should hold a program on "Knowing Your Neighbors". We will revisit that item later in the year.

Kaitlyn O'Connell, who initiated the Facebook page on diversity and town topics, "Residents of the Town of Arlington, MA", reported that it has 500 "fans".

We discussed the need to encourage civil discourse in Arlington on controversial issues. We thought it would be a good idea to bring all the groups with an interest in the topic together to talk with a consultant with experience in this area. Miriam will contact Chip Berlet from Political Research Associates in Somerville to explore his assistance. We discussed how valuable the May community discussion held as part of Stand Against Racism was. We would like to see similar discussions taking place in Arlington on a regular basis. We will try to get the sign-in list for that event and further consider how we might replicate those types of interchanges.

Submitted by Miriam Stein, [miriam.stein@comcast.net](mailto:miriam.stein@comcast.net)